

BIRD PERIL SEEN IN LATIN NATIONS

**Pesticides Menace Migrants,
Conservationist Asserts**

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SACRAMENTO, Calif., Nov. 12 — Hundreds of species of North American migratory birds that winter below Mexico City are threatened by the rapid growth in Latin-American population, a conservationist warned today.

Dr. William Vogt of New York, secretary of the Conservation Foundation, sounded the warning at a convention of the National Audubon Society. He placed some of the blame on corollary effects such as the growing use of insecticides in Latin-American agriculture.

The bald eagle, the nation's and other native birds were also mentioned with deep concern by speakers during the opening session at the El Dorado Hotel. The meeting ends next Wednesday.

Nevertheless, Dr. Carl W. Buchheister of New York, the society's president, took a generally optimistic view of the future as he said the conservationist had faith in man's ability "to fashion his destiny."

"Were it not so," he said, "we would all join those who would shoot the last whooping crane because it would make a tasty dish roasted, and subdivide the last marsh for the profits we could make in selling off the lots."

Effect of Aid Funds

Dr. Vogt declared that, paradoxically, American aid to Latin-American countries had been contributing indirectly to the destruction of wildlife habitats, thus adding to dangers confronting the future of North American winged migrants.

Often, Dr. Vogt said, governments of Central America and in northern South America "couldn't care less" about conservation in the face of high birth rates.

The United States has been encouraging Latin-American crop diversification and supporting the price of such crops as cotton.

Dr. Vogt said that a side effect of diversification, "apart from diverting some of the best lands from production of desperately needed food and worsening erosion," had been the application of massive doses of persistent insecticides like DDT.

The migratory birds, as well as the native Latin-American birds, "get their share of poison," he said.

He called on the countries re-

ceiving aid to show their appreciation for North American taxpayers' dollars by "cooperating in conservation."

Alexander Sprunt 4th of Tavernier, Fla., a research director of the National Audubon Society, reported that during each of the last three winters about 3,700 individual bald eagles had been counted in this country.

He said, "one alarming fact" had emerged since the eagle study project began in 1961. The percentage of immature birds in the bald eagle population declined from 26.5 in 1961 to 21.6 in 1963. And in the Chesapeake area the number of "immatures" had dropped from 24 per cent in 1962 to 18 per cent in 1964.

Pollutants, along with "urban sprawl and the popularity of waterfront lots" and "shooting by irresponsible and uninformed persons," received the major blame from Mr. Sprunt for a slow decline in the over-all eagle population.

"Perhaps our most serious problem relative to the use of guns today is that so few gunners are really sportsmen," said Roland C. Clement of New York, the society's staff biologist.

He said the peregrine falcon, swiftest of the hawks, had disappeared as a breeding bird in the eastern United States and the golden eagle was now only a remnant population in eastern North America and was increasingly scarce in the West.

Rise in Condor Numbers

John C. Borneman, the California condor warden, said that in this fall's condor survey 51 of the birds were counted compared with 38 in the first annual survey, made a year ago.

But he suggested that the increase might be attributed to the use of more observers, to better flying conditions and to the possible proximity of food to observation stations.

President Buchheister reported that the National Audubon Society, using donated funds, had acquired 613 acres of "prime key deer habitat" on Big Pine Key in Florida. He said the membership of the society, an organization of conservationists dedicated to the pursuit of human ends in harmony with the natural world, had increased by 8,000 in the last year to put it above 45,000.

Dr. Buchheister labeled Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall "a national hero" for his conservationist efforts, even though "we had to dispute him on dams in the Grand Canyon."

And he happily noted that "the American people have become so aroused about what is happening to their environment that the national leadership for conservation is coming from the highest office in the land."

"Conservation," he added, no longer is "a peripheral political issue as it was only a decade ago; it is a central political issue."